**Developmental and Age-Appropriate Participation in Decision Making**

The tables below are based on the approach published in the National Children’s Bureau (2009)

Embedding Listening within the Early Years.

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| **0 – 18 months** | | |
| **Developmental Stage** | **Involvement in decision making** | **Methods of participation** |
| Enjoys the company of others and shows/ seeks contact with others.  By 6 months babies usually make sounds like babbling and cooing, at 1 year babies usually will start to make talking noises like ma-ma-ma and da-da-da.  By 18 months babies usually can say around 20 familiar words such as bye-bye, no and more.  Experience things in the present through their senses  Use facial expressions, body language, pre-verbalisation and gestures to express their views | Food  Clothing  Who they want to be with  How they are handled  What they play with | Given options to choose from  Use visual aids and say the words  Accept or refuse things that are offered  Show interest and preference through nodding or shaking their head, reaching and looking towards things/people they want  Show feelings through body language such as tensing their body, tears, laughter, turning away. |

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| **1 ½ - 3 ½ years** | | |
| **Developmental Stage** | **Involvement in decision making** | **Methods of participation** |
| By 2 children usually communicate using more than 50 single words such as ball, cup and juice. They will start to put sentences together using 2/3 words such as ‘ball gone’ and ‘more juice.’  By the age of 3 children will usually use up to 300 words. They will use a variety of words to describe to show their understanding or put 4/5 words together to make short sentences such as ‘Me want to go park.’  Still use senses, facial expressions but able to consider options beyond the immediate present such as letting you know they want to go outside by walking to the door saying coat.  Able to wait for wishes for short periods of time  Beginning to use language to do some sharing and take turns  Will actively participate in small groups such  as singing, movement  Some may not see danger and others may see danger | Food they eat and how much  What they wear  What activities they engage in  Who they play with  Which activities they attend by showing they do or do not want to go such as refusing to put their coat on to go | Choosing from options, pointing to pictures, some basic verbal communication, mime, movement, painting, music, story telling |

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| **3 ½ - 5 years** | | |
| **Developmental Stage** | **Involvement in decision making** | **Methods of participation** |
| Can empathise and consider others  Some understanding of cause and effect  Use language to express themselves  Use their imagination to help them understand such as what if…?  Can share, take turns, follow rules  Interact more in groups  Talk about the past and future  By the age of 4 children will ask lots of questions such as ‘why, where and what.’ They will use longer sentences and link them together such as. ‘Mummy and me goed to the shops and had some sweets  By the age of 5 children will use sentences that are well formed such as ‘I went on holiday with Mummy and Daddy.’ | Food, clothes, activities, people, groups, environment  Choosing new equipment, menus, routines  Problem solving and conflict resolution  Caring for themselves and others  Rules and Boundaries | Choosing from options  Suggesting new options  Expressing preferences  Compiling scrapbooks/books about themselves  Making representational drawings and models  Discussing issues raised from a story  Making up and acting out stories personally or using puppets  Taking part in group activities such as circle time |

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| **6 to 10 years** | | |
| **Developmental Stage** | **Involvement in decision making** | **Methods of participation** |
| Can critically evaluate, query judgements, consider more than one thing at a time and change opinion  Can plan, carry out tasks, problem solve individually or in a group, take account of others ideas  Understand and work with numbers, size, space, time, symbols and words  Have awareness of fairness, injustice, issues with a desire to take action | All of the above  What to learn and do in their spare time  Who they live with and where  Setting and working to rules  Wider community e.g. play areas  Consider cost, space, plans, quality and quantity  Health and medical needs/treatment | All of the above  Group discussions/meetings, presentations, workshops, mind maps, pros and cons and prioritising  Drama, music and movement  Writing stories, letters, plans  Making maps, posters, books, models  Using cameras and recording equipment  Latest technology and digital media |

Sourced from [Listening to children's perspectives: improving the quality of provision in early years settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/listening-to-childrens-perspectives-improving-the-quality-of-provision-in-early-years-settings)